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Monday

Skyview senior excels in welding; Education: Ward entered Nampa schools to advance his skills

By Tammie Knauff- Idaho Press-Tribune

NAMPA - It has been six years and Mitch Ward is still welding and may continue to weld into the future as he considers his education and career.

At the age of 12, a family lawn mower broke and Ward saw his dad mending the machine.

"I asked if I could try and he let me," Ward said.

Since then, the 18-year old has kept up his interest in melding different types of metal together and his mom has made different requests for items around their family's home.

Most recently Ward constructed two weathervanes for the top of the shop. The enormous pieces were put together with scrap metal from his dad's electrical business.

Please see the STAT Sheet in Caldwell and Nampa for more information about "Good kids." The STAT sheet can be found at local businesses, Nampa and Caldwell Schools, the Idaho Press Tribune and city halls.

"I drew them up and scrapped most of it," Ward said. But he did have the letters cut out and ordered silver balls for the frame.

He used a ground rod, a piece of pipe and some electrical panel for the rest of it.

Ward said welding is 10 to 20 percent of the project and the rest it prepping it, cleaning it off and painting it.

Although Ward attends Skyview High School, he takes welding at Nampa High School.

When he decided to leave Nampa Christian Schools in order to take the welding class, he'd already learned enough on his own. He skipped the first welding class and went straight into the second one.

Nampa School District offers three levels of welding. The first is flat welding, second is vertical and the third teaches students how to weld overhead.

Besides the weathervanes, Ward has helped with pipes on the family's property. He has also created a fire pit grate that rotates on a pipe to swing the grate away from the fire. It can be disassembled and packed up for a camping or backpacking trip as well.

"Sometimes you get working and before you know it you didn't eat dinner and its time to go to bed," Ward said.

His mom laughed adding that her 6-foot-six senior usually does not miss his dinner.

Last year he was able to compete in a Skills USA competition in Boise and show off his abilities. Although he didn't place last year, he hopes to bring home first, second or third during his senior year.

Ward has also taken advantage of the college credit classes available through his high school. He's earned six math credits in trigonometry and algebra and three chemistry credits.

He will also earn seven credits in A Plus and Net Plus certification, a world-wide standard for computer and networking knowledge. Ward took the test for A Plus at the end of his junior year.